

Understanding the Call to Circles, Cycles & Circuits

Singapore, 2014

Prepared by David Joel Hamilton

Understanding the Call to Circles, Cycles & Circuits

Table of Contents

Identity, Mission and Governance

1. Foundational Presuppositions 5
2. Who and What is YWAM 6

Where we have been:

3. CCC and YWAM’s Jubilee 7
 - a. Circles of Relationship 7
 - b. Cycles of Time 8
 - c. Circuits of Geography 9
4. CCC and Realignment after a Season of Drift 11
5. CCC and Our Foundational Covenant 12

Understanding the Call to Circles, Cycles & Circuits

Identity, Mission and Governance

Foundational Presuppositions

We have gathered in Singapore as YWAM elders – joined together by God in a covenantal, apostolic, viral, global, all-volunteer, faith-missionary movement. If we do not understand our God-given identity as such, then we will be unclear about our missional purpose and be confused about our means of governance.

The world systems try to describe us not by who we are, but by what we are not. They seek to describe us as a **non**-governmental organization or as a **non**-profit association. These “**non**–“ descriptions frame us in the language of governmental or economic negatives. But even as they do so, the world systems try to hold us to – or even impose upon us – the governance structures that are used – or assumed to be normative – within the spheres of government and economics. This produces a presuppositional dissonance; for while governmental or economic identity is denied, governmental or economic structures are required.

But we find ourselves in a new day of understanding. We are in a season where we have a new-found clarity about our identity. Our identity is framed not in what we are not, but in who we are.¹ Our identity is linked to our missional calling. And this in turn shapes our leadership structures, for we understand that we are to govern ourselves in such a way as to achieve maximum Great Commission fruitfulness.

In other words, governance is to flow from identity and mission.

So, before we ask the question, “How are we to govern ourselves?” we must ask, “Who are we and what are we called to do?”

And our answer is ...

We are a “covenantal, apostolic, viral, global, all-volunteer, faith-missionary movement”² called and “dedicated to presenting Jesus personally to this generation, to mobilizing as many as possible to help in this task, and to the training and equipping of believers for their part in fulfilling the Great Commission.”³

¹ In order to fully understand our place in society we must understand that YWAM is a sodality within the domain of the church within the sphere of religion. Need to create links here for teaching on sodality/modality; the five biblical domains of authority; and the seven societal spheres of influence.

² Taken from Loren Cunningham’s letter to YWAM leaders written in September, 2013.

³ Taken from YWAM’s *Statement of Purpose*. You can find the complete statement online at <http://www.ywam.org/about-us/beliefs>.

Who and What is YWAM?

We are the waves...

- according to the vision God showed me in June of 1956.
- obeying and completing the Great Commission of Jesus.

YWAM is called to be constantly...

- covenantal
- apostolic
- viral
- global

As an all-volunteer, faith-missionary movement YWAM includes...

- every nationality, tribe, ethnicity (people groups), and language group
- all generations, but with youth as the majority.

Therefore, as long as YWAM has these elements and is...

- led and anointed by the Holy Spirit;
- continuing to be God-fearing, remaining close to Jesus as Lord;
- praising and worshiping him in Spirit and in truth;
- advancing in the “alls” and “everys” of the Great Commission implicit in the covenantal vision of the “waves” which calls us to always innovate and co-create with god in fresh ways for the accomplishment of his purposes;
- doing all as a Bible-based movement, fulfilling all of his commands, with priestly intercession, and the five-fold ministry gifts operating among us;
- while building his kingdom, planting good seed that grows into mature followers of Jesus and spiritually-alive, lasting institutions (such as schools for children, YWAM bases, UofN campuses, churches, families, healthcare clinics, and more) that serve to transform both individuals and societies in every one of the 4k omega zones of geography and in all the social & demographic spheres and groups through servant leadership...

As long as we remain faithful to these, YWAM has a bright, fruitful, and growing future with God.

YWAM is and continues to be a global family of diverse ministries that are united in Christ with the same covenant, vision and values, as we are bonded together to him and to one another, worshiping and learning together.

Jesus is winning! We also win if we stay close to Jesus, and do, be and teach the above. Isaiah 9:7 – *“Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end... The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this”* (ESV).

Understanding the Call to Circles, Cycles & Circuits

Where We Have Been

CCC and YWAM's Jubilee:

2010 was YWAM's jubilee anniversary. After the final 50th celebration in December in Kona, the Cunninghams headed off to North Kohala for a much needed rest after their global travels took them to 44 YWAM jubilee celebration events during that year. The first morning of their holiday, Loren woke up to an encounter with God during which he received a fresh Word of the Lord about

Circles of relationship,
Cycles of time, and
Circuits of geography.

As we have spent much of the past three years trying to reflect upon and implement the CCC word, we have become deeply aware that this word – though crucial for us at this season of our development as a mission globally and as a campus locally – is deeply rooted in the enduring principles of God's Word.¹ We see how all three of these elements are evident in Scripture – from the story of Creation through to the heart of the Gospel narrative. The Biblical understanding behind the CCC Word is something essential for us to move forward as a missions movement. We need to be able to grasp and articulate it so that we can rightly apply and multiply this word. Here are a few initial seed thoughts:

- *Circles of relationship:*

It is apparent from Genesis 1 onwards that the foundational reality of the cosmos is relationship. Before a single atom of matter was created God already existed in an amazing relational circle of Trinitarian love. The Godhead spoke, "Let us (plural) make (singular) man in our own image" (Gen 1:26).² Human life began with a relational Creator who made us little copies of himself so we too could live life in circles of relationship.

¹ We believe that the application of the CCC word will enable us to build "altars of stones" and avoid building "towers of bricks" (see Loren Cunningham's message to the GLT in Tijuana in 2011 found in the Signpost Messages). It gives us a distinct and fruitful way of organizing ourselves, without having to imitate governmental or economic paradigms of organizational structure.

² See also the writings of Dr Michael Schluter, founder of the Jubilee Center in Cambridge, England. His foundational book on this subject is *The R Factor* (1993), followed by *Christianity in a Changing World* (2000), *The R Option* (2003), and *Jubilee Manifesto: a framework, agenda and strategy for Christian social reform* (2005). There are many articles in the "Cambridge Papers" published by the Jubilee Center and many multimedia tools including a DVD published jointly by the Jubilee Center and the University of the Nations in 2005 entitled, *Relationism: the way forward for Europe?* At several key points in these past 10 years Dr Schluter has contributed to the thinking of the leadership of YWAM and the University of the Nations.

This foundational point is illustrated in the Gospel accounts as Jesus calls individuals to himself, inviting them into circles of relationship involving 3, 12, 70 or more. We read, “He appointed twelve—designating them apostles— [1] *that* they might be with him and [2] *that* he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons (Mark 3:14-15, NIV, emphasis added). We see that Mark highlights two purposes for which Jesus calls individuals into a circle of relationship with himself.

- First, it’s about intimacy – coming and being with him (and one another).
- Second, it’s about impact – going and doing for him (with one another).

These two elements must always be in our minds as we create and develop our circles of relationship.

- ***Cycles of time:***

We learn from the Creation account that the sun, moon and stars were created on the fourth day “to mark the seasons, days, and years” (Gen 1:14-19 NLT). It is only after the cyclical time patterns were created that God then proceeded to produce biological life – animal and human on days 5 and 6. Without this clear establishment of seasonal systems it was impossible for life to be created and multiply, “each producing offspring of the same kind” (Gen 1:21,25 NLT). It was true then; it is true now. The “times ten” multiplication that God is calling YWAM to in this post-jubilee season requires that we establish cyclical systems that facilitate exponential growth.

This is one of the key reasons why God spoke to Loren as he did on the first morning of YWAM’s second 50 years. It was so we could put apostolic systems in place which would nurture growth very much like a green-house enables plants to flourish. These systems have not to do with creating hierarchies of control. Rather they are systems which establish cyclical time patterns in which various leadership expressions gather resulting in life being multiplied. In a mobile and modular apostolic learning community like the ones we seek to create around the world, the circles of relationship will function in this life-giving way, when there is a clear understanding of the cyclical expectations we have in common (some weekly, others quarterly, still others annually).

The gospel of John underscores the importance of establishing seasonal, life-giving rhythms. This gospel is built around Jesus trips between Galilee and Jerusalem. These trips (evidence of the principles of mobile and modular) were occasioned by Jesus’ practice of attending in Jerusalem the three major Jewish festivals as prescribed by God through Moses: “Each year every man in Israel must celebrate these three festivals: the Festival of Unleavened Bread [also known as the Passover], the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters” (Deu 16:1-16 NLT). John records three trips Jesus made for the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, noting that Jesus embarked on these annual journeys to Jerusalem when “it was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration” (Joh 2:13; 6:4; 11:55). Similarly John records that Jesus traveled to Jerusalem when “it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters” and attended the seasonal

gathering there (Joh 7:1-52). Jesus not only shaped his ministry schedule around the social rhythms created by these ancient festivals prescribed by Moses. He also honored more recent Jewish seasonal traditions, for in December “Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication” (Joh 10:22 NLT) – a national holiday commemorating the relighting of the lampstands in the temple. This relighting had happened in December, 164 BC after Judas Maccabeus restored Israelite sovereignty over Jerusalem by overcoming the forces of Antiochus IV Epiphanes who three years earlier had ransacked Jerusalem and desecrated the temple with “the abomination that causes desolation” (Dan 11:31 NIV; see also 1 Mac 1:30b-61).

So, we see that John’s gospel illustrates how Jesus shaped his personal ministry itinerary around the corporate seasonal rhythms embraced by the Jewish people based on the word of the Lord and their history. It is in this same gospel of John that Jesus says to his closest circle of relationship, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you” (Joh 20:21 NLT). The manner of sending is to be modeled after his pattern – a pattern which was built around cycles of regular, seasonal gatherings. This awareness needs to guide our thinking as we discover together how to best implement the cycles of staff and leadership gatherings in our various ministries around the world.

- ***Circuits of geography:***

As the creation of seasons (day 4) made animal and human life possible (days 5 and 6), so the creation of land (day 3a) made plant life (day 3b) viable. Without land, life could not take root (literally). A Biblical understanding of geography leads us to desirable, fruit-bearing life. We read, “The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good” (Gen 1:12 NLT).

Jesus clearly understood the correlation between geography and the fruitful extension of God’s kingdom. He planned his public ministry accordingly. At the outset of his ministry, shortly after he had launched his earthly campaign in Capernaum, he said to his disciples, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come” (Mar 1:38 NIV). He had geographic circuits for outreach in mind. Even as he had begun his ministry, so also he finished it – thinking of how to take the Gospel message to the places where he and his disciples had not yet gone – charging them to go “to the ends of the earth” (Act 1:8).

Let me illustrate this with an example of how we are seeking to implement this on our YWAM/UoFN base in Kona, Hawaii. We have understood from the Lord that we are to believe him for fruitful multiplication by a factor of ten in Kona.¹ We have felt that this would

¹ This “times ten” word – though major for us – is meant to be a stimulus for growth, not a ceiling upon growth. The “times ten” word came to the mission as a whole during the GLT meetings in Jeju in (continued...)

involve an increase of “times five” on campus¹ plus “times five” off campus – resulting in the pioneering of many new missional expressions in omega zones where we are not.² If our growth were to exceed “times ten” in the future it would most certainly involve growth primarily in the geographic circuits 3-7. For the purposes of our campus we have divided the world into 7 circuits of geography. They are:

1. The Kona Campus itself (our living room)
2. West Hawaii on the Big Island (our lanai) – our serving abroad must begin by intentional serving here at home.³
3. The rest of Hawaii and the liquid continent of the Pacific, including Micronesia, Polynesia and Melanesia (our back yard)
4. Asia (our immediate neighbors to the West)
5. The Americas (our immediate neighbors to the East)
6. Europe and the Middle East (still in the larger neighborhood)
7. Africa and the Indian Ocean islands (also in the neighborhood)

The intent of this framework is to make sure that every circle of relationship serves in some way in every one of the seven circuits of geography during the course of an annual circuit of time. One of the responsibilities of the various leadership circles is to make sure that we are accomplishing this goal and that we are seeing measurable, fruitful results in the nations where we are going. Our intentionality in this area will need to increase as we move forward in implementing the CCC vision.

¹ (...continued)

2009 through the prophetic ministry of several friends of YWAM – and we in Kona have sought to apply it very intentionally. But, we also recognize that in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus taught that the seed which fell on good soil would produce far more – indeed “a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Mat 13:23 NIV). This word was confirmed by the ministry of Bruce Wilkinson during the UofN Workshop in Mexico in 2013.

¹ At the time we received this word from the Lord (in the year 2007) our quarterly student numbers averaged about 300. Our current master plan projects building out the campus so as to be able to accommodate 1500 students per quarter, plus staff, children, mission builders, volunteers, speakers and guests. This is in accord with the original master plan developed in the 1980s by Howard Malmstadt and the team working with him.

² At the time of the writing of this document, YWAM operating locations are found in about 1/5 of the 4,000 some omega zones on earth. That means that there are plenty – more than 3,000 – “empty” places awaiting pioneer efforts to see missional expressions established. We need to be encouraging a new wave of apostolic initiatives, as stated in the Nanning covenant. Loren has urged us to pioneer and serve (at least) 24 other YWAM locations situated among geographic circuits 3-7. In the recent past we have helped pioneer several locations out from Kona, but we have much more we need to do. We need to contribute to the pioneering and growth of many more ministry locations around the world.

³ Loren often comments that the light that shines the furthest is the one that shines brightest at its source. One of the original guiding words of the Lord that led YWAMers to establish themselves here in Kona is that this place would be a lighthouse to the nations – bright locally, shining globally.

CCC and Realignment after a Season of Drift:

We are where we are today after facing a time of corporate drift, laboring over a process of realignment, rejoicing in God's gracious affirmation (after a painful season of correction), giving us fresh hope as he spoke to us of "times ten" growth as we approached our jubilee year. As we are now implementing this new structure we must be aware that it should be set up as an antidote to keep us from any future lure to drift. That's why we must never forget. We must not forget that our drift occurred as we embraced the temptation to model our leadership structures after those used in the domains of business and government, rather than maintain leadership structures that were appropriate for us as a "covenantal, apostolic, viral, global, all-volunteer, faith-missionary movement."

Though we can learn many helpful managerial principles by reading books written for the marketplace, we must remember that we are to function under a different calling and anointing. Whereas in a business venture, stock-holders can determine the goals and direction of the enterprise they manage; and whereas voters can choose what kind of government they wish to have; we have no such luxury. We have been given a mission. It is not of our own making. It is rooted in God's Word and was expressed through his covenantal initiative toward us. We are not determiners of the desired outcomes, we are only stewards of a trust that has been given to us. We do not create our own authority; rather we serve under his authority (Mat 8:9; Luk 7:8).

When speaking of his ministry of preaching, Paul describes this very principal. It can equally be applied to all we do in Christ's name, including not only how we communicate, but also how we lead. Paul wrote, "I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn't ... But I have no choice, for God has given me this sacred trust" (1Co 9:16-17 NLT). Elsewhere, Paul writes of being "constrained by the Spirit" (Act 20:22 ESV) to do something which in the natural seemed out of the ordinary. So we are to remind ourselves that we too are not at liberty to do whatsoever we wish; we are at liberty to do what God wishes within the boundaries or the jurisdiction of the domain of the church's sodality.

Let us not ever forget the lessons learned over these past few years. As we implement the CCC word of the Lord we are discovering God's way to lead a missional organization that is part of a global movement. We must build it upon the word of the Lord, not by imitating that which is around us. It will take great sensitivity to the Spirit as we have not walked this way before. If we are successful we may help roll back religious structures to a pre-Constantinian framework.

It will be more of a challenge to do God's thing God's way, but it will be worth the effort we invest in it. Let us not yield to the temptation to shortcut this process, to model ourselves around the world's wisdom rather than God's. Let us not do what Israel did when they told Samuel, "Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have" (1Sa 8:5). They opted for the easy road of organizational imitation. We are being called to the more arduous road of organizational creativity. If together we co-create a viable application of this CCC word, we may well have the opportunity to create a new platform for unprecedented kingdom fruitfulness.

This word (CCC) – while being fresh and unexpected – is built on a series of words that God had spoken to the mission during the previous decade of realignment to the vision and values God had established for us as a “covenantal, apostolic, viral, global, all-volunteer, faith-missionary movement.”¹ These realignment words included:

- Loren’s Message on Drift (Nairobi, 2001)
- Loren’s Spiritual Eldership/Tripod Message (Nanning, 2002)²
- John Dawson’s Video on Realignment and Family Love (King’s Mansion, 2003)
- Lynn Green’s Vision of the Collapsing Building (Singapore, 2003)³
- Loren’s Word on Boards (Harpenden, 2004)
- Jim Stier’s Little Girl Vision (Contagem, 2005)
- Multiple Prophetic words on leadership expansion and YWAM’s multiplication “times ten” (Jeju, 2007)
- Dan Bushy’s Vision of the Platforms (Lausanne, 2009)
- Loren’s Message on Altars & Towers (Tijuana, 2011)

The content of these words and how they have shaped our YWAM story are very key for all our various ministry expressions. We need to fully understand and embrace as the Word of the Lord to us corporately.

CCC and Our Foundational Covenant:

We have come to understand since the time of YWAM’s fiftieth jubilee that our vision and values are not enough to sustain us. They are key to our identity, but they are built upon an understanding that God is a covenant-making and a covenant-keeping God.⁴ All vertical covenants in the Bible are the result of a God-inspired, destiny-defining encounter. The story of how God met Loren in the Bahamas in June of 1956 (pre-dating the birth of YWAM by four years) was just such an encounter. The story is well known to us all. It is a center piece in *Is That Really You, God?* and it is etched into the architecture of Kona’s Plaza of Nations. Though we have all told and retold the story of the vision of the waves, we are now realizing that it was more than just another vision. It was – and is – our covenantal foundation as a mission – everything that has emerged since that time flows from this covenantal encounter.

In this light, there are two key take-aways that we must continuously bear in mind as we seek to implement the word of the Lord regarding the CCC . If our application strengthens these two primary motifs of the original covenantal vision, then we will know God’s hand of blessing upon us, for we will be embracing the very purpose for which he has called us into existence. The two key points of this God-inspired, destiny-defining covenant are:

¹ From Loren Cunningham’s letter to YWAM leaders, September, 2013.

² See Signpost Messages for Loren Cunningham’s Spiritual Eldership/Tripod Message.

³ See Signpost Messages for Lynn Green’s Vision of the Collapsing Building.

⁴ See David Hamilton’s Signpost Message YWAM’S Covenantal Framework. His Covenants PowerPoint was first shared with the GLF in Tijuana, Mexico on September 2, 2013.

First of all, it was about youth. This was both a concrete reality and it can also serve as a metaphor for something more. Concretely, if we ever move away from championing young people we have moved away from the call of God upon us as the YWAM tribe. Metaphorically, this is the language of missional de-regulation and innovation. Young people were not considered candidates for missions in the mid-twentieth century. It was simply not something that was done when Loren saw this vision. And so it is today that this covenantal vision continues to call us to do what is not being done by others in the church. It calls us to lead out apostolically to birth fresh, entrepreneurial initiatives in the Spirit in order to accomplish Great Commission goals. It calls us to a lifestyle of viral pioneering, co-creating with God, doing and encouraging others to do new things in new ways.

Secondly, it was about all and every. The waves of young people covered every nation in all the continents. It is about being global, comprehensive, inclusive. If we ever lose sight of the alls and the everyys we have lost sight of God's vision for us as a movement. This is not limited only to the geographic alls. It also includes every thematic all, as we move redemptively into all the spheres, all the languages, and all the other various categories of human life and experience. As we do so, this covenant compels us to growth. It is about recurring and ever-expanding waves. This speaks of multi-generational re-iterations of the vision that expand in fractal-like multiplication. Each wave builds on that which has gone before. Each one makes fresh impact in new ways, reaching heights not previously achieved. It's never static. It's always dynamic, focused on going where we are not.